



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
Eastern District of Wisconsin*

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News Release

United States Attorney Steven M. Biskupic announced today that a federal grand jury sitting in the Eastern District of Wisconsin returned a four-count indictment charging Christopher S. Vnuk (DOB: 09/02/1979) and his parents Stephen T. Vnuk (DOB: 05/02/1951) and Sharon R. Vnuk (06/27/1951) with money laundering and conspiring to engage in money laundering.

Summarized, the indictment alleges that, between approximately May 2000 and April 2003, Christopher Vnuk sold marijuana and conspired with his parents to launder the proceeds of his drug business. Specifically, the indictment alleges that Christopher Vnuk sought to use the proceeds of his illegal drug sales to buy collector and luxury cars and other things, including auto renovation, repair, and storage services. The indictment further alleges that, to conceal that he was running an illegal drug business and spending the drug proceeds on cars and other things, Christopher Vnuk conspired with his parents, Stephen Vnuk and Sharon Vnuk:

- to have his parents buy, title, and register cars in either or both of their names when, in fact, Christopher Vnuk was the true purchaser and owner of those cars; and
- to have his parents buy goods and services in their names when, in fact, as the defendants knew, Christopher Vnuk was the true purchaser of those goods and services.

The indictment alleges that Stephen Vnuk and Sharon Vnuk used credit cards held in their names to purchase goods and services for Christopher Vnuk and then paid the credit card bills for those items using funds they knew were derived from proceeds of Christopher Vnuk's illegal drug sales.

The indictment further alleges that the defendants knowingly commingled Christopher Vnuk's drug proceeds with Stephen and Sharon Vnuk's legitimate income by depositing Christopher Vnuk's drug proceeds into Stephen and Sharon Vnuk's bank accounts, sometimes the same accounts into which the parents' deposited their paychecks.

The goods and services the parents are alleged to have bought in their names – but for Christopher Vnuk and ultimately to have paid for in whole or in part using Christopher Vnuk's drug proceeds – included a 2002 Mercedes-Benz E55 AMG and restoration of a 1970 Chevrolet Chevelle. The defendants also allegedly tried to buy a \$28,319 Rolex watch using Christopher Vnuk's drug proceeds.

The indictment alleges that, to facilitate the purchase of the 2002 Mercedes-Benz E55 AMG for Christopher Vnuk, Stephen Vnuk and Sharon Vnuk allegedly obtained a home equity line of credit in their names and then knowingly used Christopher Vnuk's drug proceeds to pay down that, and a previous, line of credit. Specifically, the indictment alleges that:

- On or about March 20, 2002, Stephen and Sharon Vnuk used approximately \$11,200 in funds derived from Christopher Vnuk's drug proceeds to pay off a pre-existing \$50,000 home equity line of credit held in Stephen and Sharon Vnuk's names and secured by their Pewaukee, Wisconsin residence.
- On or about April 1, 2002, after having paid off the \$50,000 line of credit, Stephen and Sharon Vnuk obtained a new \$100,000 line of credit in their names, and again secured by their residence. They then borrowed \$66,685 against that line of credit to finance the purchase of a 2002 Mercedes-Benz E55 AMG in their names but for Christopher Vnuk.
- In less than one year, Stephen and Sharon Vnuk made approximately \$61,635 in payments on that loan they took out to buy the 2002 Mercedes-Benz E55 AMG for Christopher Vnuk. Most of the funds used to make those payments were derived from Christopher Vnuk's drug proceeds.

According to the indictment, the government seeks to forfeit property of the Vnuk's allegedly involved in money laundering transactions, including:

- Stephen and Sharon Vnuk's residence in Pewaukee, Wisconsin,
- the 2002 Mercedes-Benz E55 AMG,

- a 1970 Chevrolet Chevelle Coupe SS454,
- a 1970 Plymouth Road Runner 440, and
- over \$15,000 in currency.

This matter was investigated by the Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation Division and has been assigned to Assistant United States Attorney Scott J. Campbell for prosecution. The City of Milwaukee Police Department and City of Pewaukee Police Department assisted in the investigation.

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The public is cautioned that an indictment is a formal method for issuing charges and does not constitute evidence of guilt. An individual is presumed innocent until such time as guilt is established by proof beyond a reasonable doubt. The public is further cautioned that an indictment alleges violations of law only by those charged in the indictment. An indictment does not allege wrongdoing, either explicitly or implicitly, against any other person.

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For more information contact:

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